**[4910-13-P]**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2022-0986; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01440-T]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

# Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** The FAA proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2000-20-15, which applies to certain Airbus SAS Model A300 and A300-600 series airplanes. AD 2000-20-15 requires a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and repetitive inspections or repair, as applicable. In lieu of accomplishing the repetitive inspections, AD 2000-20-15 provides a modification that would allow the inspection to be deferred for a certain period of time. This AD was prompted by cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and a determination that reduced compliance times are necessary. This proposed AD would continue to require the actions in AD 2000-20-15, but at reduced compliance times, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference. This proposed AD would also remove airplanes from the applicability. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

• Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

• Fax: 202-493-2251.

• Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

• Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material that will be incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at https://ad.easa.europa.eu. You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available in the AD docket at www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0986.

**Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket at www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0986; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Comments Invited**

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include "Docket No. FAA-2022-0986; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01440-T" at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to www.regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

**Confidential Business Information**

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as "PROPIN." The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public

docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

**Background**

The FAA issued AD 2000-20-15, Amendment 39-11926 (65 FR 60349, October 11, 2000) (AD 2000-20-15), for certain Airbus SAS Model A300 and A300-600 series airplanes. AD 2000-20-15 requires a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and repetitive inspections or repair, as applicable. In lieu of accomplishing the repetitive inspections, AD 2000-20-15 specifies a modification that would allow the inspection to be deferred for a certain period of time. The FAA issued AD 2000-20-15 to address fatigue cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**Actions Since AD 2000-20-15 Was Issued**

Since the FAA issued AD 2000-20-15, the average flight time (AFT) of Model A300-600 airplanes has changed. It was determined that the existing inspection compliance times must be reduced.

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued AD 2021-0288, dated December 21, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0288) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus SAS Model A300 B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, B4-120, B4-203, B4-220, C4-203, and F4-203 airplanes; and certain Airbus SAS Model A300 B4-603, B4-622, and B4-622R airplanes; Model A300 B4-605R series airplanes; Model C4-620 airplanes; and Model F4-605R airplanes. Model A300 B4-120, B4-220, C4-203, C4-620, and F4-203 airplanes

are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this proposed AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability.

This proposed AD was prompted by cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and a determination that reduced compliance times are necessary. The FAA is proposing this AD to address fatigue cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. See the MCAI for additional background information.

**Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51**

EASA AD 2021-0288 specifies procedures for repetitive inspections of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27 for cracking, and repair of any cracking. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

**FAA's Determination**

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, the FAA has been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design.

**Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM**

This proposed AD would retain all of the requirements of AD 2000-20-15, but would reduce the compliance times and remove airplanes from the applicability. This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2021-0288 described previously, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD.

**Explanation of Required Compliance Information**

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2021-0288 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2021-0288 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2021-0288 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to "all required actions and compliance times," compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled "Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)" in EASA AD 2021-0288. Service information required by EASA AD 2021-0288 for compliance will be available at www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0986 after the FAA final rule is published.

**Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this proposed AD affects 67 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

**Estimated costs for required actions**

| Action | Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product | Cost on U.S. operators |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inspection | 6 work-hours X $85 per hour = $510 | $0 | $510 | $34,170, per inspection cycle |

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary repair that would be required based on the results of any required inspection. The FAA has no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need this repair:

**Estimated costs of on-condition actions**

| Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product |
|---|---|---|
| 31 work-hours X $85 per hour = $2,635 | $132 | $2,767 |

**Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

**Regulatory Findings**

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

**List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

**The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

**PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

**§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by:

a. Removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2000-20-15, Amendment 39-11926 (65 FR 60349, October 11, 2000); and

b. Adding the following new AD:

**Airbus SAS:** Docket No. FAA-2022-0986; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01440-T.

**(a) Comments Due Date**

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**(b) Affected ADs**

This AD replaces AD 2000-20-15, Amendment 39-11926 (65 FR 60349, October 11, 2000) (AD 2000-20-15).

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus SAS airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this AD, certificated in any category, as specified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0288, dated December 21, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0288).

(1) Model A300 B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, and B4-203 airplanes.

(2) Model A300 B4-603 and B4-622 airplanes.

(3) Model A300 B4-605R and B4-622R airplanes.

(4) Model A300 F4-605R airplanes.

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and a determination that reduced compliance times are necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to address fatigue cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Requirements**

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2021-0288.

**(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0288**

(1) Where paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2021-0288 specifies, for certain conditions, using the compliance time and repetitive intervals "in the applicable SB," and where "the applicable SB" specifies that the "1st inspection will be done within [a specified number of flight cycles] after receipt of the Service Bulletin," this AD requires compliance within the specified number of flight cycles after the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2021-0288 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) The "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2021-0288 does not apply to this AD.

**(i) No Reporting Requirement**

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0288 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

**(j) Additional FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):* The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer:* For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

**(k) Related Information**

(1) For EASA AD 2021-0288, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at https://ad.easa.europa.eu. You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA.

For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket at www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0986.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov.

Issued on July 27, 2022.

Christina Underwood, Acting Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2022-16451 Filed: 8/1/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 8/2/2022]